

Wings: Memories and Comfort Food.



Some lazy, mid-August afternoon ago, I spent a good couple of hours lying in bed trying to decide what to have for lunch. Sick of the usual Mcdo, and too much without energy and enough ingredients in stock to cook something, I remembered that a few weeks back, I'd drunkenly devoured some mystery chicken at this gig, courtesy of a friend who'd decided to feed us eager-beavers for supporting his band. I suspect that the influence of alcohol, and my hunger had me thinking that the stuff was gift from the gods at the time.

The sensory consumption of sensory goods is a very interesting experience, in so many cases, it is hardly ever just a separate, singular phenomena—there is, an accumulation of collected memories. I recall lurking around Youtube finding some stray video of Charlie Rose interviewing the chef Thomas Keller, and I was mesmerised as I heard Keller talk about how his favorite dish was roast chicken, and recounting that they would have it during family celebrations—and therein is an account of a dish becoming a storehouse of several memories, and even, a recurring character in the life and times of you, me, and whoever so eats and remembers in this way.

Before I started to really actually like buffalo wings, I'd had it a good three or four times before I started to actually seek it out every so often. Some discoveries are made when something that has been present before finds the spotlight shining on it, and at that moment you start to pay attention. I was



twelve or so when my character of a polio-laden uncle and I spent the day traversing the grimier, but charmingly tacky parts of Manhattan, he local as can be, saying hello to interestingly ruffian looking fellows all over the city, pretended to be a tourist for a day. We ended up having dinner at the second floor of this huge chain-restaurant, overlooking the scattered and blindingly bright Time Square lights that locals don't really go out of their way to take a look at. That was the first time I ever had buffalo wings in my life, and at the time, I was focusing on the noise of the scenery, wondering why the hell my chicken was so damn sweet, and wondering where I could wash my hands after handling the sticky stuff. I totally forgot about buffalo wings after. Fast forward to sophomore-year college, White Plains, after a pretty intense game of tennis, I was with a friend, her now-ex, and someone I knew in grade school, I bite into the meat and I think, hey, I've had this before. But it would take a couple more years for me to get to the point where less acute senses had me thoroughly enjoying what was probably pretty mediocre chicken. Funnily enough, I never forgot that, and this all-Americana is now etched into my consciousness. And I had wings that August afternoon.

words by Gabrielle Gatchalian

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